

Truth, Memory and Solidarity - Keys to Peace and Reconciliation

Statement of the COMECE on Peace

Preamble

(1) The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union considers the approach of the new millenium as an appropriate occasion to launch a reflection on how best to achieve and maintain peace. As bishops we consider it an important part of our responsibility to take a stand on political and social processes which are of vital importance for the life of all persons and peoples in Europe and beyond. We therefore speak as representatives of the various Bishops' Conferences from the countries of the European Union to all people of Europe – to those who share our faith, but also to all others of good will, and especially those whose bear particular responsibility in politics and society.

(2) The Bible impresses upon us the concern for peace; the Old Testament prophets repeatedly refer to the inseparable link between justice and peace, and in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus preaches that 'blessed are the peacemakers' (Matthew 5:9). In the pastoral constitution of the Second Vatican Council and in the pronouncements of the Popes in this century, special emphasis is placed on an ethics of peace. Pope John XXIII devoted an entire encyclical to these issues, while the same spirit animates Pope John Paul II's encyclical "Centesimus Annus" : "true peace . . . never results from military victory, but consists in overcoming the causes of war and in genuine reconciliation among the peoples" (CA 18). In his message on World Peace Day 1999, the Pope emphasises that peace is only possible where the dignity and rights of man are respected and protected.

(3) The Bishops' Conferences in individual countries have also addressed peace issues repeatedly and in a variety of ways, thus underscoring the fundamental importance of this theme. We believe that the idea of a united Europe and the idea of peace are closely connected. After the catastrophe of two devastating wars in this century, statesmen in various countries of our continent began the step-by-step construction of a common Europe. They sought political and social structures which would forever banish the phenomenon of war from this part of the world and allow its peoples and nations to become genuinely capable of living in peace. Despite all the progress which we can thankfully acknowledge, this desire for peace remains equally pertinent today. Moreover in any assessment of the process of integration in Europe, one of the essential criteria by which its success is to be judged is precisely its contribution to the European states' capacity for peace.

(4) For political decision-makers, and for all those who in their various ways share public responsibility in society, the necessary task today is to search together for the conditions under which a just peace is possible, a just peace being the only means capable of preventing war. In this regard we are not unaware that the ideas of those in power about how a just peace can be brought about are influenced by a multitude of different world views and normative orientations. The task of finding a comprehensive basic consensus is thus as difficult as it is urgent. Fired by the deep commitment to peace integral to Christian spirituality, we wish to contribute to ensuring that this search is successful. In so doing, we orient ourselves in accordance with Jesus' demand that we understand the signs of the time (Luke 21:5-28) – to pay attention to the actual suffering and sacrifices of people and the necessity to alleviate them instead of evading this ethical claim by attempts at ideological justification. We confirm that the love of God and the love of one's neighbour form an indissoluble unity – not only in private life, but also in politics – even in the field of international relations. Despite the realism about the limits which even today the quest for an ethically acceptable foreign policy frequently encounters, we persist in our conviction that everything must be done to exhaust, and indeed to constantly expand, the opportunities and possibilities of such a policy.

Positive developments

(5) Firstly, we would like to express our joy that the challenges raised by the political transition in Europe at the end of the 1980's were faced head-on and that progress is being made in addressing them in such a wide range of areas :

(6) National borders have largely lost their divisive character for people. Europe's division into two hostile blocs bristling with weapons was overcome without violence. The threat of a major, highly destructive war involving the use of nuclear weapons appears to have been substantially reduced. International organisations and institutions (e.g. the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) have been further developed and have contributed to creating an ever more closely-interwoven network of co-operative security structures. The Atlantic Alliance also formulates its missions with respect to co-operation with the states of Central and Eastern Europe in a more comprehensive manner. In countries which, under the conditions of the East-West confrontation, were obliged to remain strictly neutral, discussions are now being held about what foreign policy responsibilities should be adopted in the future so as to help consolidate a peaceful order.

(7) The Communist dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe were overthrown without bloodshed. In many of these countries, legal systems have been abolished which did little more than reflect a single party's claim to total power. Democratic constitutional orders have now been introduced almost everywhere, whereby fundamental human rights and individual freedoms are effectively protected against state intervention. Where such fundamental reforms have succeeded, once familiar instruments of political repression, which caused suffering for countless people, no longer appear as an unchanging reality.

(8) Cautiously and gradually, the search moves forward for ways to deal with the "shadows of the past" and soothe the pain of wounds which in some cases were inflicted on the victims many years ago. This is especially urgent in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and it has become clear - although to differing degrees and in different ways – that the importance of this task is being recognised. The courageous steps taken to peacefully overcome apartheid

in South Africa show that processes of inner reconciliation are not limited to the European context. The model of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes clear that the internal peace of a society cannot be reached and maintained as long as one attempts to evade the question of how to deal appropriately with the burden of memory. Similarly, after the civil war in Guatemala which lasted for more than thirty years, our brutally murdered brother Bishop Gerardi did much to ensure that the “recovery of historical memory” project could be successfully implemented. This created one of the most important prerequisites for honestly remembering and confronting that nation’s most recent history. This is the only way to prevent the suffering of those who were the victims of injustice and violence from being glossed over and trivialised.

Reasons for shame and sorrow

(9) Nevertheless, alongside these advances there are other events and developments which cause us concern and about which we feel sorrow and shame.

(10) We have failed to prevent war from returning to Europe. The former Yugoslavia broke apart under frightful excesses of violence, the victims of which were primarily civilians. The escalation of violence in the Balkans has made clear just how fragile many achievements of civil society really are. It has also revealed how little we can rely on political relationships imposed primarily through external pressure or internal repression to continue to exist in the long term.

(11) Moreover, the clashes in former Yugoslavia represent a new type of conflict based not on international quarrels, but rather deriving from relations within states which fall seriously short on matters of political and social justice. In the post-Cold War era, the main challenge to peace lies in the escalation of such conflicts and in the latent danger of their spreading to neighbouring states. Moreover, such conflicts clearly reveal the danger of nationalistic ideologies. They seek to revive unhealed memories of past suffering and injustice in order to incite people to commit violence against fellow human beings.

(12) Internal conflicts are not limited to Central and Eastern European states. Although we know that each crisis and conflict situation has its own unique features, it is nevertheless true for Western Europe that until very recently some regions, for example, Corsica, the Basque region, Northern Ireland, have repeatedly been shaken by violence and terror. Here, too, peace processes have advanced only haltingly, suffering numerous set-backs.

(13) Until now, a way has not been found to adequately control or stop the proliferation of conventional weapons and the spread of nuclear technology for military purposes. The nuclear weapons tests in India and Pakistan in the Spring of 1998 clearly demonstrated the serious dangers ahead if such trends continue. Yet it must also be recalled that the major nuclear powers have still not fulfilled the promises they made in disarmament treaties, and that even today the causes of the political conflicts, which can be seen behind the striving to secure all kinds of modern weapons, cannot be effectively counteracted.

(14) In many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, people experienced the end of the East-West confrontation as a liberation, but also as the beginning of new uncertainties concerning their personal future. Familiar political, economic and social structures - despite often having been rejected in their concrete form - were destroyed as a result of this historical watershed. For many, the changes brought disorientation, and often they lost things they had hoped they had attained forever and of which they were proud. They soon began asking how newly-won freedoms and standards of social justice could be reconciled in the future.

(15) Questions of political and social justice are also being posed with increasing urgency for the states of Western Europe. Growing unemployment, especially among the young, drug abuse, criminality, a climate of growing intolerance and a readiness to commit violence against minorities in their own country, foreigners and immigrants : all these factors threaten to undermine domestic peace. These developments, whose roots in part surpass the national framework, indicate that the cohesion of Western societies is also endangered by injustices and divisions. They call out for a renewal of fundamental agreements on questions of national and international solidarity and the protection of individual human dignity.

(16) The stability of even democratically legitimated political orders and the personal safety of their citizens are threatened by terrorism and organised crime which reach across national borders. The difficulty of combating these threats within the framework of the law may undermine the public consensus for a liberal and democratic order of state and society. We are no less concerned about such socio-political effects than we are about the underlying causes themselves.

Current Challenges

(17) Particular responsibility is borne in this respect by those forces in politics and society which can significantly influence the possibility of ensuring such a fundamental consensus. This is also true for the churches and religions. They often participated in the development and the course of armed conflicts. However, today they can have an influence on opening opportunities for preserving and promoting peace.

(18) As bishops, we turn therefore not only to those who share our faith, but also – as we mentioned in the introductory lines – to all people of good will who can work together to build a community of peoples capable of ensuring peace and a viable future. The current political map of Europe and the world less than ever justifies making a sharp division between problems affecting the peace-maintaining responsibilities of the international community of states and problems traditionally understood as issues of justice to be established internally.

(19) Is it not the case that the developments we have criticised have a common root in an excessive emphasis on various forms of self-interest, to the detriment of that comprehensive common good towards which actions of social solidarity must be directed even in social and political systems? Has not the pursuit of such self-interests via a struggle for power on virtually all levels become the leading principle of action? Does this not necessarily mean that, even in the structures in which this action is performed, standards of non-partisan political justice can no longer be adequately applied? Precisely because we recognise the progress which has been made in recent years in the further development of instruments for ensuring peace, we are concerned that these structures may fail to achieve everything they otherwise might because they are insufficiently animated by a spirit of international

solidarity. Certainly this is one of the most profound reasons for the slow advance towards a Common European Foreign and Security Policy.

(20) We recall the great progress made in the relations of peoples and states which became possible especially after the Second World War on the basis of a universally held interest in greater peace and justice. The relationship between the peoples of France and the Germany can serve as an example in this regard. It proved possible to overcome the traditional thinking on both sides which saw in the other primarily a political opponent and rival, if not simply the enemy. This resulted from the will for peace shared by all the major actors, who found the courage and the willingness to work together politically and economically. Only in this way could traditional forms of thought and behavioural patterns be questioned, and the perception sharpened for those challenges which increasingly confront the peoples of Europe and the world.

(21) We therefore issue a plea that the urgent and necessary adjustment of the political systems to the tasks which must be dealt with to maintain peace today be accompanied by a conversion of the heart. In a renewed spirit corresponding to such a change of heart, it will be possible to revise the reduction of the responsibility for peace to the particular interests of each state and people. In the cold light of day, they are only a part of that over-arching general interest of humanity which may be referred to as the global common good. Only the perspective of such a transnational common good allows us to recognise where the pursuit of the interests of the nation state loses its legitimacy because it violates the basic rights and interests of others and thus easily leads to new injustice or to the continuation of long-standing unjust relations.

(22) Such considerations have consequences in all areas of political and social life. These include questions ranging from ensuring peace by means of conventional foreign policy, to the further development of international law. They also include the complex problems of controlling the major economic, social and ecological trends which today are frequently covered by the term “globalisation”. In this context, the development of structures of a united Europe takes on new significance, for it helps to build bridges between the well-being of persons, groups, nations and the entire international community. With regard to the global common good we find the following tasks to be especially urgent :

Founding the future of Europe on solidarity and justice

(23) Until now, the Member States of the European Union have, on concrete issues, voted for their their own respective options, even when they have shared an interest in the further development of the European Institutions. This applies in the field of security policy, but it is no less true in essential questions of economic and social policy. For the further development of such institutions, as in the process of opening up the European Union for the admission of additional European states, it is imperative to reach agreements and regulations on the basis of a balancing of interests which are deemed to be just and indeed to embody solidarity vis-à-vis all of those affected. This requires that the economically and politically powerful actors be willing to renounce their own advantages where this is the only way to effectively combat poverty, misery and political destabilisation in the Eastern countries and – as Pope John Paul II stated in Vienna in the spring of 1998 – to gradually eliminate the “inhuman differences in living standards which currently exist within Europe”.

(24) Currently, the absence of a policy oriented in all respects on this principle is revealed with particular clarity in the internal European handling of international migration questions. We fear that the necessary solidarity with refugees and asylum-seekers is barely detectable in current proposals for revising the asylum and refugee laws – not only within individual Member States, but also at the level of European institutions. Instead, the possibilities for defence on the part of potential host countries against unfounded claims for protection and concerns for internal security seem to be the sole determining criteria of refugee policy. This is especially problematic given the growing number of people who are fleeing inter-ethnic confrontations and civil war-like conflicts. We increasingly seem to forget the question of what responsibility we share for the fate of these people, on the basis of the moral imperative of respecting their personal dignity.

(25) Every consideration of particular national interests must remain compatible with the objective of granting protection to refugees and persecuted individuals and guaranteeing their fundamental human rights. In particular, no one may be deported anywhere where he risks being subject to torture or other forms of cruel and inhuman treatment. Before returning war and civil war refugees to their countries of origin, one must carefully examine whether the situation there allows the returnees to be effectively protected against renewed violence, and to be progressively reintegrated into the local society. Moreover, precisely in the field of migration policy a readiness to share the burdens throughout Europe represents one of the most important challenges on the path to its further integration. We emphasise this because we cannot escape the impression that precisely on this issue there is a lack of political will to take and carry out necessary and reasonable decisions within the European framework.

(26) The principle of a fair balancing of interests must also be respected in relations with states which, for the foreseeable future, will not be joining the expanding European institutions. Relations in the field of foreign and security policy as well as on the level of economic co-operation must be structured in such a way as to avoid giving the impression that Europe is seeking to preserve its economic prosperity and foreign-policy stability at the expense of other international partners. Rather, it is incumbent upon an economically strong, influential and highly integrated Europe to support to the best of its ability fairer structures in the world economy. Likewise it is basic to an understanding of security which takes seriously the requisite orientation towards the all-embracing common interest of the international community that a concept of security be developed in a universal perspective : as joint security not only for the wealthy states of Western Europe or the North Atlantic area, but also for and with those states which, for various reasons, are not included in the existing structures and institutions of multilateral security policy. In an all-encompassing European perspective, one must insist that the people in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe have legitimate security interests no less than do those in the Members States of the European Union or of NATO, interests which must be taken into account when developing and expanding a peaceful order. Finally, we would recall that the decisive standard for the political quality and the ethical legitimacy even of concepts for guaranteeing European or global security lies in how far these concepts benefit those who are most threatened by poverty, violence and a lack of freedom, i.e. what concrete impact they have on the situation of the weak and vulnerable, the refugees and those who are persecuted on political, ethnic or religious grounds.

Expanding the possibilities for preventing violence

(27) The bloody events of recent years – in former Yugoslavia, but also in Central and Eastern Africa – have taught us that, without rigorous application and systematic expansion of the means and methods for early recognition of conflicts and without timely exertion of political influence on crisis situations, crucial opportunities for preventing escalation in the use of force are squandered. Concepts of peaceful conflict resolution are being worked on, especially within the framework of the United Nations and its subsidiary organisations, and we emphatically support these efforts. In accordance with the tradition of Church teachings on peace, we emphasise that priority must always be given to the pursuit of a policy of avoiding violence. Only on the fulfilment of this precondition may it be legitimate in extreme cases to seek for ethical criteria for the possible use of violence ; such will be the case only where policy aimed at the avoidance of violence proves unsuccessful.

(28) Oftentimes requests for military intervention come not just too late in respect of reports concerning atrocities which have already taken place ; such requests are as often evidence of serious failures in the phases immediately preceding armed conflicts. Those who wish to avoid seeing military interventions by the international community become the ultimate political means must do everything to ensure that the theoretically available instruments of preventive conflict resolution and early crisis management are used much more decisively than has been the case until now. We emphasise this also because armed interventions often have their own problematic, especially when one considers them under the ethical criteria which Christian tradition has developed for stemming and limiting violence.

(29) In contrast to this, a positive example for preventive conflict resolution is offered by the long-term missions of the OSCE in several states of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, where its mandate above all focuses on mediating in the event of impending conflicts between titular nation and ethnic minorities, monitoring the observance of respect for human and minority rights, and supporting the process of democratisation. The experience gathered there must be evaluated and integrated into a comprehensive concept of preventive policy. Such a concept must take into account the fact that successful conflict resolution processes already represent a contribution to preventing new tensions and their violent escalation.

(30) The churches and religions also share in the responsibility for the success of such efforts. We therefore ask their representatives to participate, wherever and whenever possible, in the many and by no means exclusively political tasks entailed by the concepts of conflict prevention and resolution.

Protecting the legitimate interests of minorities

(31) Protecting the legitimate interests of minorities opens up a way for politically dealing with and perhaps resolving many internal conflicts which might otherwise quickly develop their own momentum, making them ever more difficult to keep under control. Inadequate protection of minorities is one of the major reasons why attempts to secede from existing states find political resonance. The call for border revisions which frequently accompanies such efforts indicates that inadequate consideration of minority interests can pose dangers not only for domestic, but also for international peace.

(32) Thus it corresponds perfectly to the long-term self-interest of the currently existing nation states and their central governments to remove the reasons which incite members of

minorities to embrace secession and border revision by introducing democracy and expanding possibilities for participation in political decision-making processes, by accepting federalist forms of government and generous autonomy arrangements. Even if, in a given case, substantial difficulties stand in the way of such policies, it nevertheless appears to be the only alternative to a prolongation and intensification of foreseeable serious conflicts which could threaten the very survival of states. However the introduction of democratic processes and organisational forms per se cannot guarantee that appropriate and ethically acceptable decisions are made. For a genuinely living democracy, one which actually serves the well-being of a society because it permits existing oppositions and conflicts to be dealt with politically and resolved without violence, it is indispensable that the citizens of that society appropriate and internalise an ethos which supports it. Such an ethos becomes especially evident where not merely rights are claimed, but where the obligations of solidarity are also affirmed.

(33) The responsibility of the respective nation states for an appropriate legal and political position of the minorities living within them should be supplemented by a more effective structure of international instruments for protecting human and minority rights. We therefore refer to the political significance of this area of responsibility of the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the OSCE, and ask those responsible to ensure that this office is adequately staffed and equipped so that it may fulfil its mission of peacefully dealing with latent or on-going minority conflicts.

Countering fundamentalism through sustainable development

(34) Not only for reasons of humanity and fairness, but also out of sheer self-interest, the wealthy countries of the world must engage in development co-operation to promote peace in and between those countries which are still disadvantaged in many respects. For with increasing global integration no individual state will any longer be able to preserve its own interests if it violates the basic requirements of international justice and thus of the global common good. The immense socio-economic disparities not only between but above all within states constitute an intrinsic peace-endangering potential. In an age when financial capital is highly mobile and corporate decisions about where to locate are made on an increasingly global scale, the peace-maintaining function of justly structuring the world trade order and a more consistent orientation of the decisions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in line with the needs of the poor and disadvantaged gain increasing importance.

(35) In this connection, it is also necessary to seek a solution for the often enormous indebtedness of precisely the lesser developed countries which does not impose intolerable burdens on the poorest and weakest members of those societies. The latter should not be held responsible for the debt situation; to impose upon them the primary burden for the consequences of this situation would be a serious injustice. Beside generous conversion agreements, the possibility of a substantial debt relief must be seriously considered, such as the International Monetary Fund recently decided to accept for several Central American countries suffering from the devastating effects of a hurricane. The prerequisite for the success of such measures are institutional precautions in the indebted countries to ensure that it is the poor who actually benefit from the debt relief.

(36) Moreover, a socially and ecologically compatible policy of developmental co-operation which is sustainable over the long term will not only make an immediate contribution to

improving the lot of the world's poorest citizens. It also offers a significant opportunity to counter the varieties of fundamentalism which are already perceived as a threat. While it is true that fundamentalist movements regularly draw their strength from political and ideological motives, there exist close ties between the social acceptance which fundamentalist movements enjoy and the degree to which individual life situations are perceived as hopeless.

(37) Therefore, in the attempt to counter the different varieties of fundamentalist endeavours, primary attention must be directed at removing the fertile ground for the social and political roots of such movements. This is the only way to ensure that in political and military security concepts a nuanced analysis of the causes of fundamentalism and its extreme radical terrorist forms is not replaced by a stereotype image of the enemy, something which particularly threatens to poison relations with the Islamic world.

(38) Development is not simply a matter of economics and appropriate political and legal structures. Parallel and complementary efforts from culturally influential institutions and organisations – including the Churches and religions – are necessary. Only in this way can we develop a social climate of tolerance and readiness for dialogue in which a determined engagement on the part of different groups for a better common future becomes possible. Through their activities in this area, Churches and religions perform a genuine task of peace education to help meet the intercultural challenges on the threshold of the next millennium.

Sustaining efforts towards arms control and disarmament

(39) Alongside failings in the field of sustainable development, it is above all the dissemination of armaments of all kinds which is today undermining peace and stability in many regions of the world. The ready availability of such arms not only decisively encourages attempts at military solutions to political conflicts ; it also creates the preconditions for developing a reciprocal armament dynamic, in which each party justifies its own armament measures as an actual or supposed advance on the states regarded as enemies. Furthermore the proliferation of modern weapons technology significantly facilitates many forms of domestic political repression which are linked to serious human rights violations.

(40) It is therefore imperative to convince political and economic partners in the field of arms production of the importance of restrictive standards for such exports, and to conclude binding agreements in this area as quickly as possible. In this context we mention especially the efforts to draft a European code of rules for arms export and we greet the corresponding resolution of the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted in May 1998 as a first step in the right direction. We further suggest that through effective agreements it be ensured as far as possible that dual-use goods be used exclusively for civilian purposes.

(41) All decision-makers who bear political responsibility for maintaining a high level of armaments must clearly understand that already agreed arms controls do not make more extensive disarmament superfluous. This urgent desideratum applies especially for nuclear weapons : unless they demonstrate their own willingness to disarm, today's nuclear powers lack all credibility when they call on other states to renounce their quest for nuclear weapons.

Dealing with burdens from the past : a task of peace

(42) Every conflict resolved by force creates victims and is often allied with immense human suffering. Of course, it is not only in the form of memories of war and civil war that past action weighs on the souls of human beings. Europe had to experience how modern dictators became ever more efficient at exercising a maximum degree of repression, how they became ever more effective at putting their subjects under pressure and corrupting them morally, and how they made this the very principle of their almost unlimited exercise of power. In such contexts representatives of the Churches have also been burdened with guilt.

(43) To keep open spaces so that the suffering of the victims can be remembered, so that they retain a chance of being heard, so that the socially experienced division into a world of perpetrators and a world of victims can be overcome – these are immediate, irreplaceable contributions to the consolidation of social peace. Such steps for dealing with the shadows of the past are urgently required in many places – not just in the former Yugoslavia, Central and Eastern Africa and Latin America. Political action and prosecution of human rights violations might possibly facilitate them – and from this perspective, we welcome the international community's recent success in Rome in agreeing to create a Permanent International Criminal Court.

(44) However the efforts to deal appropriately with the shadows of the past cannot stop there. It remains a fundamental task for civil societies which are aware of their responsibility for a better future for their community. We regard co-operation in processes seeking ways to allow people to live in human dignity with the burdens of the past as a task especially suited for Christian movements which are committed to securing greater justice and peace. This is also a central area of joint responsibility for ecumenical collaboration among the Christian churches.

Contributing through educational and cultural work to the growth of mutual trust

(45) Educational institutions and the programmes they offer can have a great impact on public opinion. They can contribute to promoting political strategies, but they can also work effectively to counter them. The formation or revival of images of the enemy, of nationalistic ideologies, of clichés of supposed ethnic superiority often lay the groundwork for the success of all possible variants of the politics of force. By contrast, the power of such violence-breeding clichés can be broken through direct encounters with persons of the supposed “enemy” group, through efforts to clarify what really happened in the course of a shared history, through the shared clarification of reasons for the development of different historical images and concepts of identity, and through similar forms of mediation. This is a field whose importance can scarcely be overestimated, not least for the work of religious schools, academies and faculties.

Conclusion

(46) Many decision-makers in politics and society are striving daily to perform the tasks sketched here, and we wish to express our thanks for their efforts. We thank also all those who, as members of the Church and faithful to the message of the Gospel, make their contribution to the cause of justice and peace. In various countries we rejoice to see that such efforts have borne fruit. We ask everyone to maintain and increase their efforts, so that the development and expansion of institutions and instruments of joint European policy will demonstrate that a permanent, just peace in this world need not remain a mere utopia.

(47) May God's spirit keep alive in us the ethical orientations which we defend together here. We pray that He grant us the grace to help others to understand that reconciliation is a gift of God and a source of new life. We invite everyone who shares this belief with us to form a community of prayer for peace and reconciliation surpassing the borders of territories and languages. May our common prayer give us the power to patiently and persistently follow our path on which we wish to bear witness : because we are reconciled with God in Christ, we can also seek reconciliation with one another.

Brussels, 11th March 1999

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(translated from the original German)